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Occupational Employment and Wages in Grand Rapids-Wyoming — May 2015

Workers in the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$20.65 in May 2015, about 11 percent below the nationwide average of \$23.23, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Charlene Peiffer noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were lower than their respective national averages in 15 of 22 major occupational groups including legal; arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media; and computer and mathematical. No wages in the local area were higher than their respective national averages.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 4 of the 22 occupational groups, including production; transportation and material moving; and architecture and engineering. Conversely, 12 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including office and administrative support; protective service; and computer and mathematical. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Grand Rapids	United States	Grand Rapids	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Total, all occupations.....	100.0%	100.0%	\$23.23	\$20.65*	-11
Management.....	5.0	4.7*	55.30	49.93*	-10
Business and Financial Operations.....	5.1	4.2*	35.48	29.38*	-17
Computer and Mathematical.....	2.9	1.8*	41.43	31.80*	-23
Architecture and Engineering.....	1.8	2.6*	39.89	34.02*	-15
Life, Physical, and Social Science.....	0.8	0.4*	34.24	28.26*	-17
Community and Social Services.....	1.4	1.4	22.19	22.26	0
Legal.....	0.8	0.4*	49.74	38.85*	-22
Education, Training, and Library.....	6.2	5.2*	25.48	23.47*	-8
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media.....	1.3	1.7*	27.39	17.07*	-38
Healthcare Practitioner and Technical.....	5.8	5.6	37.40	35.43	-5
Healthcare Support.....	2.9	3.1	14.19	14.14	0
Protective Service.....	2.4	1.2*	21.45	19.70	-8
Food Preparation and Serving Related.....	9.1	8.1*	10.98	10.38*	-5
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance.....	3.2	3.5	13.02	12.12*	-7
Personal Care and Service.....	3.1	2.3*	12.33	12.44	1
Sales and Related.....	10.5	10.0	18.90	19.65	4
Office and Administrative Support.....	15.8	14.4*	17.47	16.87*	-3
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry.....	0.3	0.1*	12.67	12.26	-3

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Grand Rapids	United States	Grand Rapids	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Construction and Extraction.....	4.0	3.0*	22.88	21.29*	-7
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair.....	3.9	3.9	22.11	20.63*	-7
Production.....	6.6	13.7*	17.41	16.03*	-8
Transportation and Material Moving.....	6.9	8.7*	16.90	14.60*	-14

⁽¹⁾ A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Grand Rapids is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

One occupational group—production—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Grand Rapids-Wyoming had 71,530 jobs in production, accounting for 13.7 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 6.6-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$16.03, significantly below the national wage of \$17.41.

Some of the larger detailed occupations within the production group included team assemblers (15,070); helpers--production workers (4,000); and first-line supervisors of production and operating workers (3,920). Among the higher paying jobs were power plant operators along with stationary engineers and boiler operators, with mean hourly wages of \$32.50 and \$31.45, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were pressers, textile, garment, and related materials (\$9.92) and tailors, dressmakers, and custom sewers (\$10.57). (Detailed occupational data for production are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/2015/may/oes_24340.htm.)

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See [table 1](#).) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, above-average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the production group. For instance, tool and die makers were employed at 7.5 times the national rate in Grand Rapids, and furniture finishers, at 5.1 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, structural metal fabricators and fitters had a location quotient of 1.0 in Grand Rapids, indicating that this particular occupation's local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth.

Notes on Occupational Employment Statistics Data

With the issuance of data for May 2015, the OES program has incorporated redefined metropolitan area definitions as designated by the Office of Management and Budget. OES data are available for 394 metropolitan areas, 38 metropolitan divisions, and 167 OES-defined nonmetropolitan areas. A listing of the areas and their definitions can be found at www.bls.gov/oes/current/msa_def.htm.

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. The OES program produces employment and wage estimates for over 800 occupations for all industries combined in the nation; the 50 states and the District of Columbia; 432 metropolitan areas and divisions; 167 nonmetropolitan areas; and Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. National estimates are also available by industry for NAICS sectors, 3-, 4-, and selected 5- and 6-digit industries, and by ownership across all industries and for schools and hospitals. OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm.

OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 sampled establishments in May and November each year. May 2015 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2015, November 2014, May 2014, November 2013, May 2013, and November 2012. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 73.5 percent based on establishments and 69.6 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted employment of sampled establishments across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 57.9 percent of total national employment. (Response rates are slightly lower for these estimates due to the federal shutdown in October 2013.) The sample in the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area included 4,132 establishments with a response rate of 75 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The May 2015 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm.

Metropolitan area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Grand Rapids-Wyoming, Mich. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Barry, Kent, Montcalm, and Ottawa Counties.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/midwest. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm. Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/oes/2015/may/methods_statement.pdf.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request . Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 800-877-8339.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2015

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Production Occupations.....	71,530	2.1	\$16.03	\$33,340
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers.....	3,920	1.7	27.86	57,960
Electrical and Electronic Equipment Assemblers.....	(5)	(5)	16.01	33,300
Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers.....	80	0.5	16.47	34,260
Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters.....	310	1.0	17.94	37,310
Fiberglass Laminators and Fabricators.....	(5)	(5)	15.70	32,650
Team Assemblers.....	15,070	3.6	14.23	29,590
Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other.....	1,420	1.6	14.21	29,560
Bakers.....	480	0.7	12.13	25,220
Butchers and Meat Cutters.....	460	0.9	13.81	28,730
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers.....	530	0.9	11.69	24,310
Slaughterers and Meat Packers.....	120	0.4	13.60	28,290
Food and Tobacco Roasting, Baking, and Drying Machine Operators and Tenders.....	(5)	(5)	12.57	26,150
Food Batchmakers.....	1,400	2.8	15.25	31,720
Food Cooking Machine Operators and Tenders.....	200	1.6	13.56	28,210
Food Processing Workers, All Other.....	80	0.5	13.07	27,180
Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic.....	2,060	3.7	18.21	37,870
Computer Numerically Controlled Machine Tool Programmers, Metal and Plastic.....	380	4.0	21.59	44,920
Extruding and Drawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	510	1.9	16.49	34,290
Forging Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	(5)	(5)	16.27	33,850
Rolling Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	(5)	(5)	14.42	30,000
Cutting, Punching, and Press Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	2,250	3.1	16.16	33,610
Drilling and Boring Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	230	4.0	21.31	44,330
Grinding, Lapping, Polishing, and Buffing Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	310	1.1	16.32	33,940
Lathe and Turning Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	400	2.7	17.50	36,390
Milling and Planing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	230	3.1	18.45	38,380
Machinists.....	3,090	2.0	18.85	39,200
Metal-Refining Furnace Operators and Tenders.....	(5)	(5)	16.47	34,250
Pourers and Casters, Metal.....	40	1.2	21.29	44,290
Foundry Mold and Coremakers.....	(5)	(5)	17.25	35,880
Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	(5)	(5)	12.84	26,700
Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	1,790	4.5	12.72	26,460
Tool and Die Makers.....	2,110	7.5	23.28	48,410
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers.....	1,690	1.2	16.85	35,050
Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	470	2.4	18.66	38,810
Heat Treating Equipment Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	40	0.5	18.21	37,870
Plating and Coating Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic.....	420	3.1	12.54	26,080
Tool Grinders, Filers, and Sharpeners.....	80	2.0	16.29	33,890
Metal Workers and Plastic Workers, All Other.....	70	0.9	13.77	28,650
Prepress Technicians and Workers.....	240	1.8	16.61	34,540
Printing Press Operators.....	880	1.4	16.63	34,590

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2015 - Continued

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Print Binding and Finishing Workers.....	310	1.6	13.80	28,710
Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers.....	580	0.8	11.52	23,960
Pressers, Textile, Garment, and Related Materials.....	(5)	(5)	9.92	20,640
Sewing Machine Operators.....	430	0.8	12.58	26,160
Sewers, Hand.....	40	1.6	13.43	27,930
Tailors, Dressmakers, and Custom Sewers.....	(5)	(5)	10.57	21,980
Textile Cutting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	30	0.6	13.46	27,990
Extruding and Forming Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Synthetic and Glass Fibers.....	90	1.2	14.07	29,260
Upholsterers.....	170	1.5	14.85	30,880
Textile, Apparel, and Furnishings Workers, All Other.....	(5)	(5)	11.83	24,600
Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters.....	630	1.8	17.45	36,300
Furniture Finishers.....	320	5.1	15.63	32,510
Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood.....	240	1.3	13.42	27,920
Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except Sawing.....	820	2.9	13.38	27,830
Power Plant Operators.....	160	1.1	32.50	67,590
Stationary Engineers and Boiler Operators.....	30	0.3	31.45	65,410
Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators.....	220	0.5	22.59	46,980
Chemical Plant and System Operators.....	90	0.7	25.33	52,690
Plant and System Operators, All Other.....	160	3.6	23.71	49,310
Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders.....	120	0.5	22.27	46,330
Separating, Filtering, Clarifying, Precipitating, and Still Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	100	0.5	18.56	38,610
Crushing, Grinding, and Polishing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	(5)	(5)	16.82	34,980
Grinding and Polishing Workers, Hand.....	280	2.6	14.41	29,980
Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	940	1.9	16.21	33,720
Cutters and Trimmers, Hand.....	70	1.2	12.87	26,780
Cutting and Slicing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	(5)	(5)	15.83	32,940
Extruding, Forming, Pressing, and Compacting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	300	1.1	14.28	29,710
Furnace, Kiln, Oven, Drier, and Kettle Operators and Tenders.....	40	0.6	18.43	38,330
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers.....	(5)	(5)	15.68	32,620
Dental Laboratory Technicians.....	80	0.6	19.61	40,790
Ophthalmic Laboratory Technicians.....	(5)	(5)	14.14	29,410
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders.....	2,990	2.1	12.82	26,670
Coating, Painting, and Spraying Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	770	2.3	15.93	33,130
Painters, Transportation Equipment.....	140	0.7	19.74	41,060
Painting, Coating, and Decorating Workers.....	170	2.9	17.30	35,990
Photographic Process Workers and Processing Machine Operators.....	(5)	(5)	15.07	31,350
Adhesive Bonding Machine Operators and Tenders.....	90	1.3	15.33	31,890
Cleaning, Washing, and Metal Pickling Equipment Operators and Tenders.....	(5)	(5)	14.88	30,960
Etchers and Engravers.....	100	2.8	17.11	35,590
Molders, Shapers, and Casters, Except Metal and Plastic.....	100	0.7	13.16	27,380
Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	410	1.2	17.03	35,420
Helpers--Production Workers.....	4,000	2.4	12.12	25,210

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2015 - Continued

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Production Workers, All Other.....	1,400	1.5	13.37	27,800

- ⁽¹⁾ For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_24340.htm.
- ⁽²⁾ Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.
- ⁽³⁾ The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.
- ⁽⁴⁾ Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a 'year-round, full-time' hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.
- ⁽⁵⁾ Estimates not released.